

County of Los Angeles DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020 (213) 351-5602

February 21, 2012

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY Third District

DON KNABE Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH Fifth District

To:

Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman

Supervisor Gloria Molina

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas

Supervisor Don Knabe

Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From:

Philip L. Browning

Director

RESPONSE TO THE OCTOBER 11, 2011 MOTION COMPILING LOS ANGELES COUNTY DATA ON CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT AND DEATHS

On October 11, 2011, on motion of Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich and Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer and all affected agencies that partner in child welfare services, County Counsel and the Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect, (ICAN), was directed to report back in 30 days and quarterly thereafter on a mechanism by which to comprehensively report on child abuse, neglect and deaths in a meaningful way to inform the Board's child safety, permanency and self-sufficiency policy decisions.

We are submitting a summary of DCFS' Child Fatality data for the period January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011, which also includes a summary of In-Person Response Referrals by allegation type and number substantiated (see Attachment). In our November 10, 2011 response, we stated that DCFS and ICAN will include a reconciliation and review of data sets in order to identify the differences between ICAN child death data and SB 39 data. ICAN and DCFS have agreed to meet on a quarterly basis to analyze and compare ICAN's data set against DCFS' data set. These meetings will be important as they will enable ICAN and DCFS to ensure that the data sets that each collects are consistent and that any variances in the data can be explained.

We have identified a significant reason for the variance in the two data sets. ICAN uses Coroner/Medical Examiner findings and nomenclature for child fatalities (this nomenclature includes final modes of death as determined by the Coroner including homicide, suicide, accident and undetermined). DCFS data collection is not dependent upon Coroner final determinations. Currently, ICAN is formatting 2010 data for its annual report and compiling 2011 data as Coroner final determinations are made. DCFS has compiled 2011 data and is

The Honorable Board of Supervisors February 21, 2012 Page 2

currently collecting 2012 data. We are working to compare real-time data even though our collection periods are different.

Further, DCFS's data set regarding child fatalities incorporates the requirements and standards of SB 39, which are slightly different from the Coroner's determinations that are used by ICAN. DCFS has provided ICAN with 2010 data in order for ICAN to compare their 2010 data prior to the release of ICAN's annual report. ICAN is also in the process of devising a system to allow for some of its data to be reported on a quarterly basis.

DCFS continues to work with the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Office to establish a Memorandum of Understanding to regularly obtain their index data, which includes all information on certificates of death. ICAN continues to meet with numerous agencies that partner in child welfare services, including the Sheriff's Department, Los Angeles Police Department, Department of Health Services, Department of Mental Health, Probation Department, Schools, District Attorney, Los Angeles City Attorney and DCFS. ICAN also plans to build an inventory of records used by other Child Death Review Teams including: birth records, school records, public and private medical records, previous domestic violence records, probation, parole, emergency medical responses and the number and age of siblings. We anticipate that the application of these data sets to a manageable target group can be tested by beginning with applying them to the infant homicide cases for one year.

Lastly, the ICAN National Center on Child Fatality Review continues their work with other teams and experts nationally to share resources, including models on how to review, manage and prevent fatal and severe child abuse. ICAN will be working to expand their data collection system and ensure that the information learned from case reviews is compiled in a comprehensive and cohesive fashion so that case data and other resources can be shared with line staff who work directly with the children and families we serve.

DCFS continues to work on developing a mechanism to provide comprehensive meaningful and concise data on child abuse and neglect to inform the Board's child safety, permanency and self-sufficiency policy decisions. We will provide the Board with an update regarding the requested data and information in 90 days.

If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may contact Aldo Marin, Manager, DCFS Board Relations Section, at (213) 351-5530.

PB:JL FL:af

Attachment

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect

IN-PERSON RESPONSE REFERRALS

	2011	1-01	201	2011 - 0.2	201	2011-03	201	2011 - 04		
ALLEGATION TYPE	REFERRAL	SUBSTANTIATED	REFERRAL	SUBSTANTIATED	REFERRAL	SUBSTANTIATED	REFERRAL	SUBSTANTIATED	TOTAL REFERRAL CHILDREN	TOTAL SUBSTANTIATED REFERRAL
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CHILD FATALITY DATA SUMMARY

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Sub A & C: Final determination concluded that the fatality met subdivision C criteria (the fatality is Confirmed to be caused by abuse and/or neglect)
Pending Final Determination: Initial determination concluded that the fatality only met subdivision A criteria but no final determination has been made as of the report date February 1, 2012.

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CHILD FATALITY DATA SUMMARY

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NOTE: Child Fatality data summary from DCFS CWS/CMS database as of February 1, 2012.